

# FENCING TIMES

*UK & Ireland*

*2024, Issue 13*

Game presents  
Frog-X

Radius Reverse new  
kit from FAC

Betafence  
presents  
Securifor  
Defender



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## Fencing Times

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# Often you are too scared

**“W**hat, wood? Do you want a fence made of wood? Do I look like a carpenter? We do not have wooden fences here, go somewhere else. Bye.” It is an answer a customer can get just like that when walking into an arbitrary fencing company. And not just for wooden fencing. “Agricultural or wildlife fencing is rotten stuff to put up and the margins are low, we don’t get involved with that,” we have heard many times here at the editorial office. As well as: “detection fencing gives far too many false alarms, it will only cause trouble,” and “ornamental fencing we don’t do either, because people who order ornamental fencing whine about every scratch.”

So what else do we have? Wire mesh? “Well no, that’s from the old days.” High-security fencing? “We do not do that either. Far too much lugging around with heavy prison mats and the razor wire will cut open your hands.” Guide rails then? “Are you crazy? Way too boring, all those kilometres straight along the motorway.” Is there anything left? So what fences do you put up? “Well um, double bar of course!”

We exaggerate a little. The average fencing contractor can erect more than one type of fencing - and does so regularly. But it is noticeable that by no means every fencing company has all types of fencing in its catalogue.

Double rod, bar fencing and wire mesh can actually be done by anyone. However, the number of fitters who can still properly assemble wire mesh fencing is decreasing.

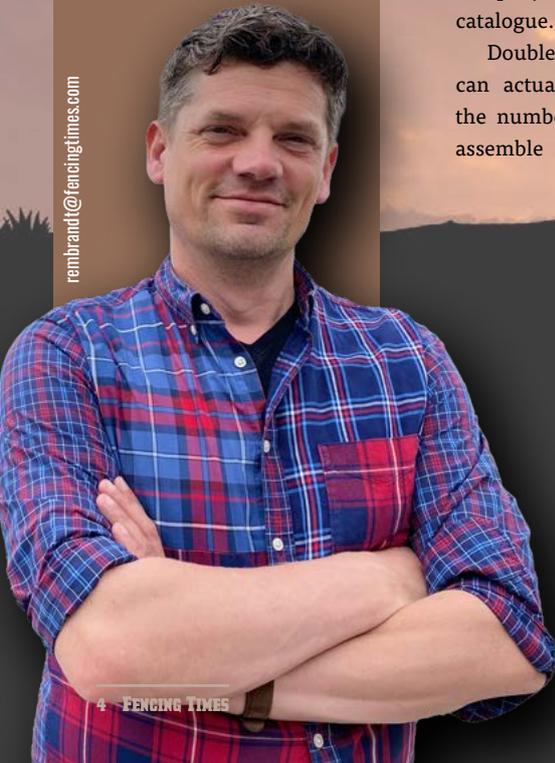
Mortise fencing is also being offered by more and more fencing contractors because demand for it is growing so fast. But we also know fencers who primarily install agricultural and wildlife fencing, passing up all other jobs. Or those who only put up wooden fences. Or only ornamental fencing.

Sometimes this is a very conscious choice. Of course there is nothing wrong with that in itself. If you specialise in one type and are a true professional in that type, customers from the extended area will come to you and you will obtain every job in that area because you can deliver the best quality at the best price.

But often it is also something that has just developed that way, without really thinking about it. You learnt to fence from your supervisor, so you can install the fences he could install. There is no fence worker who first went to fencing school, where he learnt how to set every type of fence there is - because there is no such school.

And then you stayed with those fencing types. Once you started for yourself, those were the types you offered to your customers. You knew where to buy them and how to install them. You knew how long it takes to install them - and so you could calculate the bid.

Anything that is different is difficult, awkward, and sometimes complicated. A customer asking for a fencing type that you have never installed before is tricky. You have to look for a supplier, you have to figure out





exactly what materials, accessories, and fasteners you need, and then you have to estimate how long the install will take - and hope you do not miscalculate hopelessly. So you pass it up and thank them for the job.

In itself it is all very logical, but at the same time it is also a shame. If you talk a customer, who would be satisfied with a simple mesh fence, into a double bar fence because you do not have installers who can put up a mesh fence, for example, then that customer has to spend more money than necessary and is less happy. Or he goes to a competitor and then you are less happy. Especially if it is a regular customer who regularly ordered fencing from you and now stays with that competitor.

And that while it is often unnecessary to say no to a customer who wants a fence that you do not yet have in your catalogue. Because every fence is the same. You have to put posts in the ground and place padding against or between them. The most difficult part is making sure all the posts are in line, at the right height and at the right spacing. If you can do this with steel posts, you can also do it with wooden posts, concrete posts, or aluminium posts. And vice versa. Everything else is secondary, it just involves some figuring out.

And although fencers - in the absence of fencing school - often have the idea that they have to invent and learn everything themselves, in practice this is not really so bad. Those who dare to ask, get quite a lot of answers.

Manufacturers and other suppliers understand quite well that not every fencer can assemble all fencing types. They do not think you are dumb if you ask how to install, or calculate, their product. On the contrary:

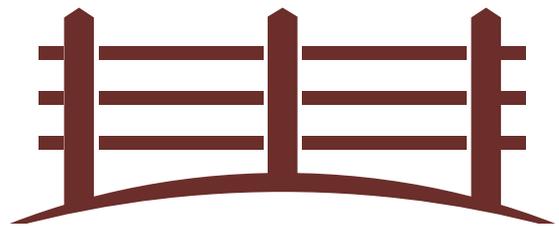
they are happy that you want to sell it for them and will be happy to help you as a colleague.

There are also several Facebook groups for fence workers. If you join those, you can ask colleagues for advice. Most fencers enjoy sharing their knowledge with you and are happy if they can be of service to a colleague.

And even customers can help you. If you ask them honestly if you can do the installation at an hourly rate, because you don't install the fence you order especially for them on a daily basis and therefore don't have experience with the installation time, chances are they will say yes, because they see that you are committed to them.

It does take a bit of perseverance. Not everything is successful the first time, in fact that applies to everything in life. But the more you try, the faster you will know if and whether you can make money from something. The more fencing types you can set, the more customers you can serve. And the better a customer is served, the more he is willing to pay a competitive price for it.

Feel free to try it out - and send us pictures of the end result, if it worked out. We would love it! ■



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# FENCING CHAMPIONSHIP 7 & 8 SEPTEMBER 2024

SAVE  
THE  
DATE

## LOCATION

Wenschdorf near Miltenberg  
(60 km south of Frankfurt)

## LINE UP

SATURDAY

- Training
- Qualifying
- Fencing Party

SUNDAY

- Championship
- Entertainment for young and old

# FENCE POST

## Michel@Hofman

Michel Hofman of Zoetermeer company Hofman Hekwerk in the Netherlands made this stunning gate. The project was a major collaboration: The design came from architect VVKH from Leiden, the wood was supplied by Foreco in Dalfsen, Vrijeban Beton in Delft produced the concrete pillars, Struyk from Berkel en Rodenrijs provided the zinc end caps for the pillars, and Blijleven from Pijnacker made the letterbox with the house number. Hoogendoorn from the village of Hazerswoude took care of the electrics, Van Tol from Berkel en Rodenrijs paved the driveway, and Kiestra from Eindhoven supplied the access control. "Versatile through collaboration," Michel commented - and that's a fact. Thanks for sending it in!



## Marco@Hadra

Marco Herzog from Hadra's Philipsburg branch sent us this photo from Völklingen, in the German state of Saarland. "For years now there's been a gate here, just sitting on its own, waiting for the fence," he writes. That is indeed a strange state of affairs, Marco. Thanks for the photo!







## *Photo of the month*

We received this photo from Gerd Schmidt of Zaunteam Hamburg-Ost, showing a two-colour aluminium fence he installed. The customer then added his own lighting, creating this superb result.

Thanks for the photo, Gerd! This month's Locinox radio is heading to Hamburg.

Would you also like the chance to win a Locinox construction radio? Send your best photos to [foto@fencingtimes.com](mailto:foto@fencingtimes.com).

# AFI organises Best Practice Day in Sussex



In mid-March, the UK's Association for Fencing Industries (AFI) held a Best Practice Day around agricultural fencing. At the event, the finalists from previous editions of various UK fencing championships shared their tips and tricks for installing both wooden and steel agricultural fencing.

*"We see differences in quality – sometimes big ones – in the agricultural fences that are being put into the ground across the country," CEO Pete Clark says. "That's only logical – there's no 'fencing school'; everyone installs fences the way their foreman taught them to do it, and not everyone had the same foreman. But a bad fence can give the whole industry a bad name, and if the customer isn't familiar with the differences in quality it means there's unfair competition. That's why we've organised this event."*

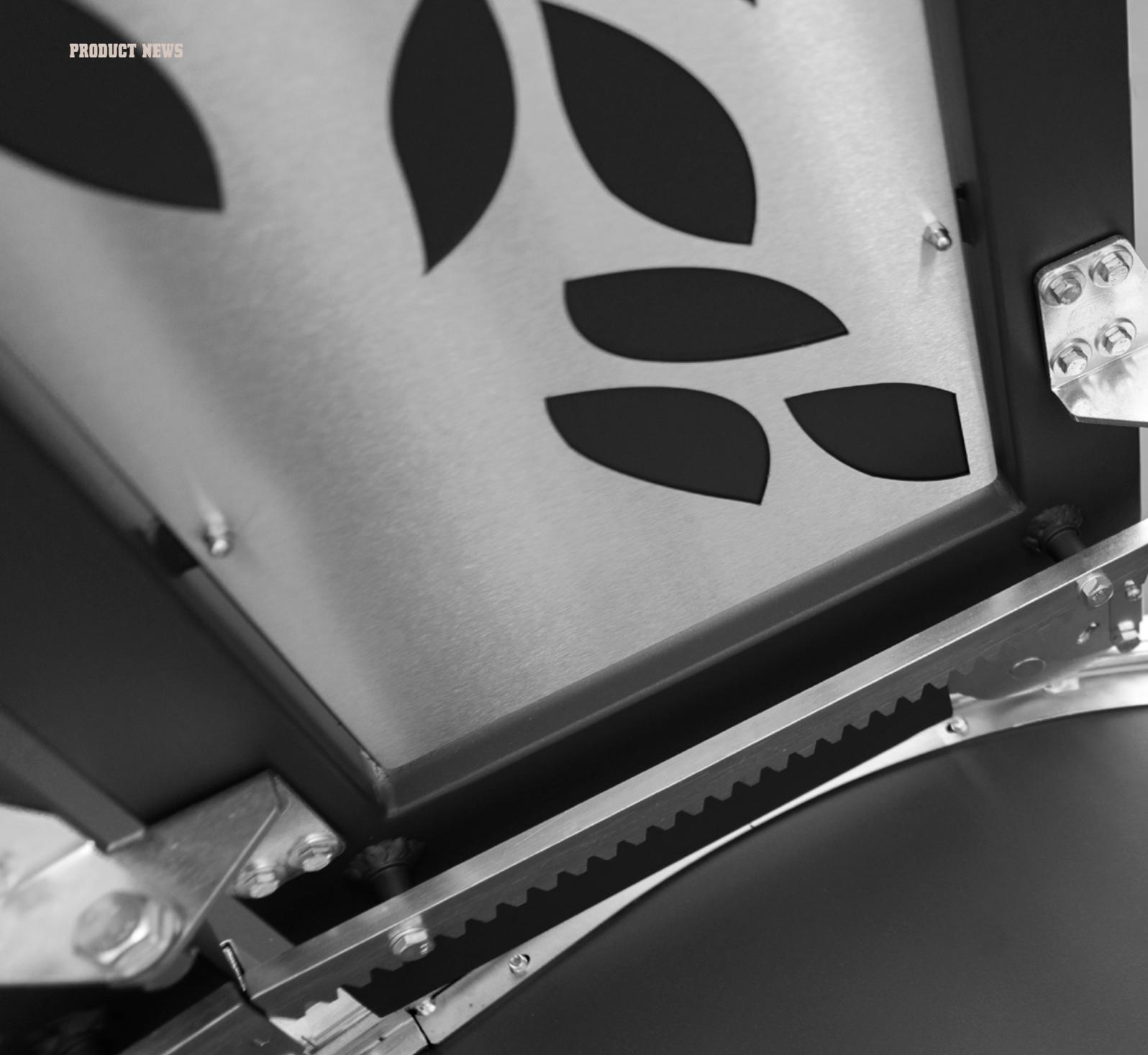
The Best Practice Day was held on the grounds of Plumpton College, an agricultural school in Lewes in the south of England. About 100 fencing installers got together there to view – and to discuss, as good fencers should – various techniques for tensioning wire and mesh, and building braces and corners.

Installers Rob Bell, Jono Bradley, James Corbett, Mark Evans, Nic Quan, Peter Redgwell, Rory Samson and Charlie Wright – all of them finalists from previous editions of the British Open Fencing Championship, the UK Fencing Timber Championship or the Tornado Wire Fencing Competition – had volunteered to act as trainers. They took the participants through various demo setups to explain how they worked. AFI director Pete Clark gave a 30-minute seminar on how to make a sound calculation, and a representative of LineSearch explained where and how to make a free enquiry about whether there are cables and pipes in the ground at a particular location.

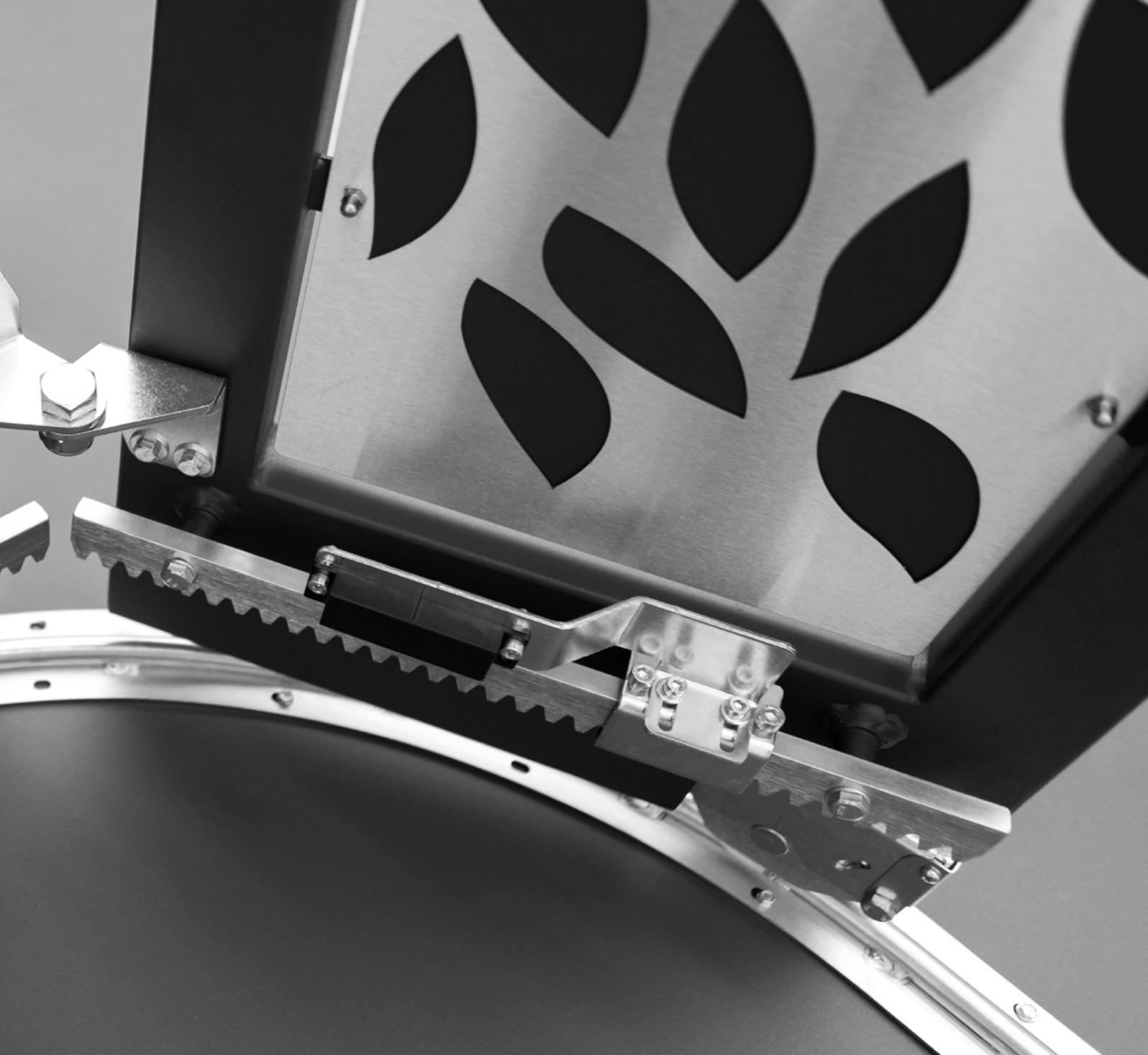
The event was sponsored by wildlife mesh manufacturer Tornado Wire and timber post supplier Scanpole, each of which also had a stand at the event where they answered questions on the best or fastest ways to install their products. It cost next to nothing to take part, with an entrance fee of 10 pounds sterling, that was only charged so a caterer could make cheeseburgers for everyone at lunchtime.

*"We can reflect on a very successful day," Clark says. "We discussed lots of different topics, and learnt a lot from each other. I've had a lot of positive feedback, so we'll definitely be doing this more often, possibly in other parts of the country. We might be able to organise something around the next edition of the Fencing Awards in Newcastle, but we're also considering Edinburgh."* Fencing Times will keep you posted. ■



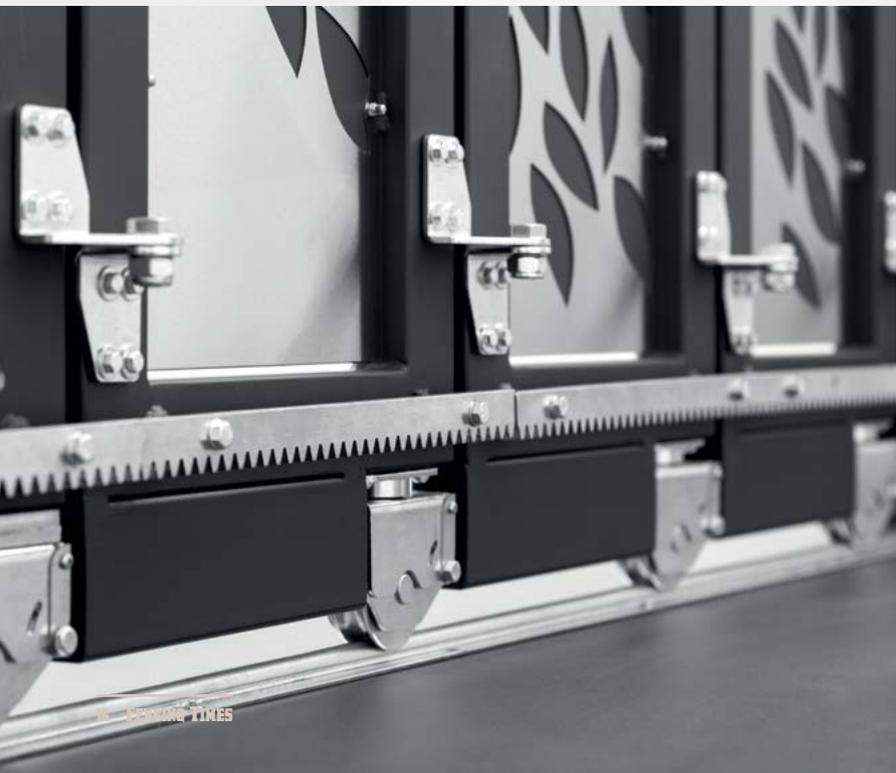
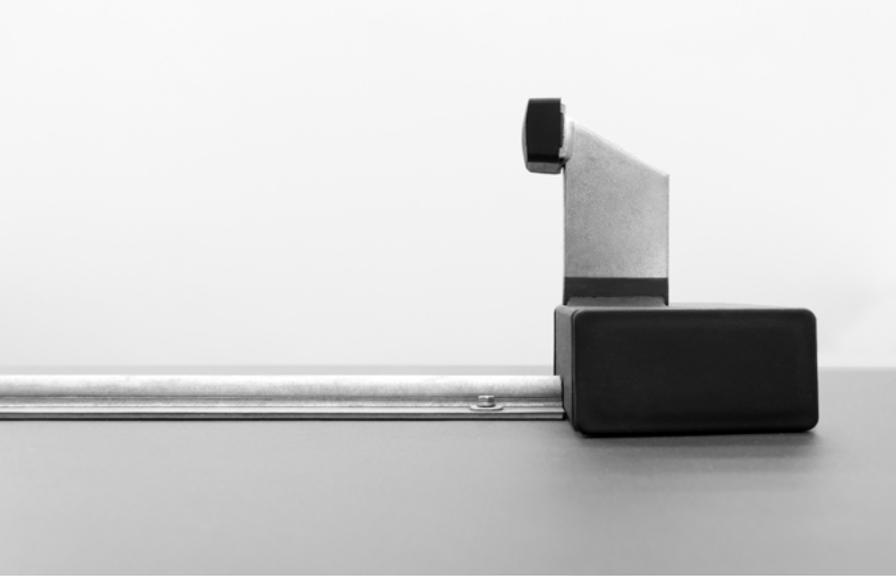


# Radius Reverse new kit from FAC for sliding gates



FAC, a gate hardware manufacturer from Isola Vicentina in northern Italy, introduced an updated version of its sectional system Radius at the R+T exhibition in Stuttgart. This new kit is called Radius Reverse and allows for a larger free passage with a reduced footprint.

**“T**he existing Radius kit is ideal to use all the features of sliding gates on narrow driveways without return space,” says managing director Fausto Valente. “When the available space is rather small, though, every centimetre usually counts. That is why we continued to develop the kit, to see how we could make the opening clearance as large as possible.”



## **RADIUS**

The existing Radius Solution is a system that allows a tracked sliding gate to slide on a curved rail. To this purpose, gate builders do not make one long sliding gate leaf but divide it into multiple segments. Those segments each rest on their own wheels and special hinges then join them together. *"The Radius is ideal when you have no return space for a sliding gate and no swing space for the leaves of a swing gate,"* says Valente. *"For example, if the customer wants to be able to park his car immediately behind the gate, that car could be in the way when closing the swing gate leaves. With the Radius, you can build a gate for that customer that slides past the side of that car. It's a solution that can be installed along walls, fences and buildings, allowing for considerable space saving."*

## **REVERSE**

With the new Radius Reverse kit, the guide post and gate drive are located behind the curve. *"The big advantage of this is that the footprint of the gate is much reduced,"* Valente explains. *"This allows you to offer a customer the maximum passage width. Just over eighty per cent of the total available space remains available as free passage with the Radius Reverse."*





## KIT

FAC supplies the Radius Reverse in seven different predefined kits, suitable for openings from 2.5 to 6 metres. Each kit includes special hinges to connect the leaves, a 90-degree curved track to steer the gate around the corner, 360-degree swivel wheels that enable driving over a curved rail, a guide plate and an end stop. Each kit comes with extensive documentation on how to assemble all parts and the dimensions of the leaf segments to allow the gate to slide smoothly over the curved rail. The new Reverse joins the programme alongside the existing Radius solution. *“The Reverse is intended for driveways where every centimetre really counts. Both solutions provide high level of performance, the choice of one over the other depends on the objective needs for general space-saving or maximising the opening clearance.”* ■

# Betafence presents Securifor Defender

This spring, Betafence is marketing a new type of fencing which is even more difficult to penetrate. Built from two rows of Securifor prison mesh panels, with transverse prison mesh in between, it can delay intruders with a petrol grinder for almost 7 minutes.



**“S**ecurifor Defender stems from a custom-made project,” says product manager Kris Van Waes. “We designed it years ago for a project in the Middle East, at that time in an even heavier version. But we now see that the demand for fencing with a larger delay factor is also increasing in Europe. That is why we have now created a standardised version of it and included it in our catalogue.”

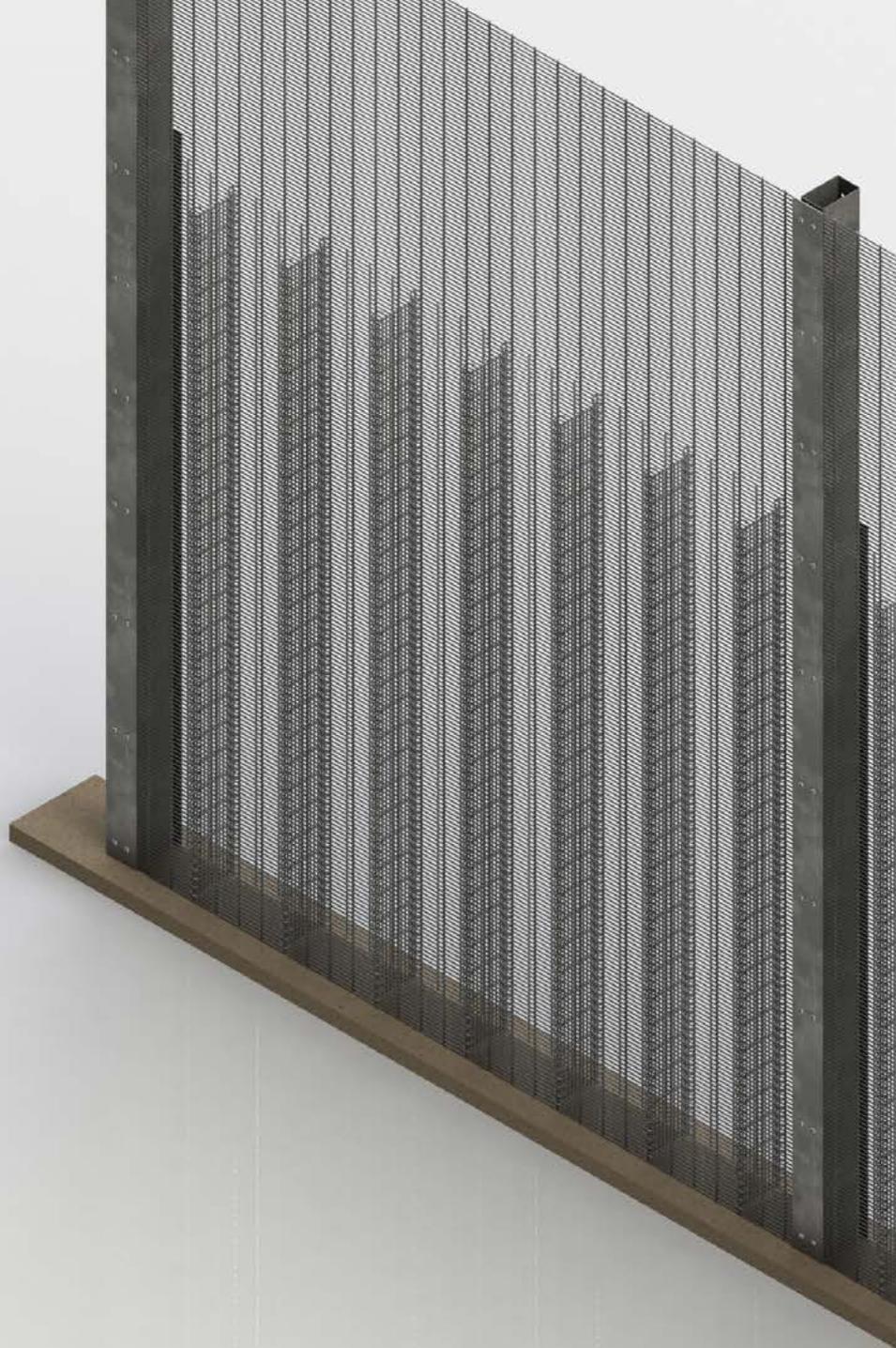
### DEFENDER

Securifor Defender consists of posts against which prison mesh panels<sup>1</sup> are mounted on the inside and outside. The space between the two mesh panels is filled with transverse intermediate panels. Securifor Defender has a fence height of at least 3 metres. The outer panel is also embedded 300 millimetres into a continuous foundation to prevent undercutting. The inner panel and intermediate panels are at a standard 2 metres high. The intermediate panels are spaced just under 40 centimetres apart. The mesh panels are attached to the posts with a continuous cover strip.

### LONG DELAY

*“The major advantage of Securifor Defender is that it creates an extensive delay, while you can still see through it reasonably well,”* says Van Waes. *“Having good visibility is incredibly important for security guards, it is the reason for many security experts to choose a fence, rather than a concrete wall. But then it does have to be a fence that delays intruders, giving guards time to get to the scene. And that is the beauty of Securifor Defender: the intermediate panels and the distance between the inner and outer panel make it exceedingly difficult to reach the inner panel with a grinder. The delay time is up to fifteen times greater with Defender than with the other fence types in the Securifor assortment. It is the ultimate delay fence on today’s market.”*

1) Prison mesh panels, best known in Britain where they were designed as 358-mesh (pronounced: three five eight), are single wire mesh panels made of thin wires of almost 4 millimetres (8 gauge) with a mesh size of 3 inches by 0.5 inches. The combination of the small mesh and thin wire makes the panels difficult to climb over, making them popular with prison designers.



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*“Securitor Defender is  
the ultimate delay fence  
on today's market”*

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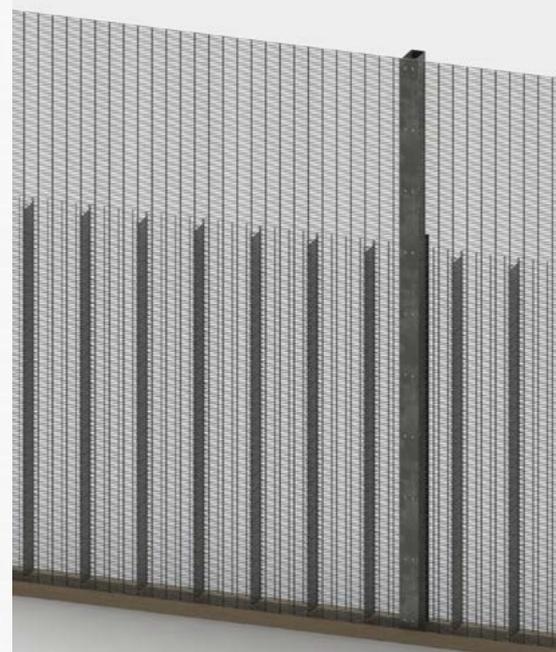


### PETROL GRINDER

An independent testing institute assessed the delay of the new system against the requirements of the ASTM F2781 standard. "To meet that standard, it is assessed how long it takes to create an opening in the fence of 600 by 600 millimetres," says Van Waes. "600 by 600 millimetres is considered the smallest opening that an intruder needs to climb through. A distinction is made here between intruders with only simple tools like a crowbar, a hammer and a saw, intruders with heavier tools like bolt cutters and an electric grinder, and intruders with a heavy petrol grinder. To meet the requirements of the standard, you have to stop the aggressive intruders with the petrol grinder for 5 minutes. Securifor Defender does just that: the test team needed 6 minutes and 48 seconds."

### AFFORDABLE

This delay is achieved by the Securifor Defender without extortionate costs. "The price is about the same as Securifor Double Skin," says Van Waes. "That has so far been the fencing type in the assortment with the greatest delay. With Double Skin, two prison mesh panels are welded together, with one panel turned 90 degrees. That is also very sturdy, but the system has the disadvantage that you cannot see through it very well since the meshes become exceedingly small at 12 by 12 millimetres. With the Securifor Defender, the distance between the mesh panels ensures that visibility is much better. This makes it an ideal system for high-risk applications, such as oil and gas terminals, data centres as well as prisons."



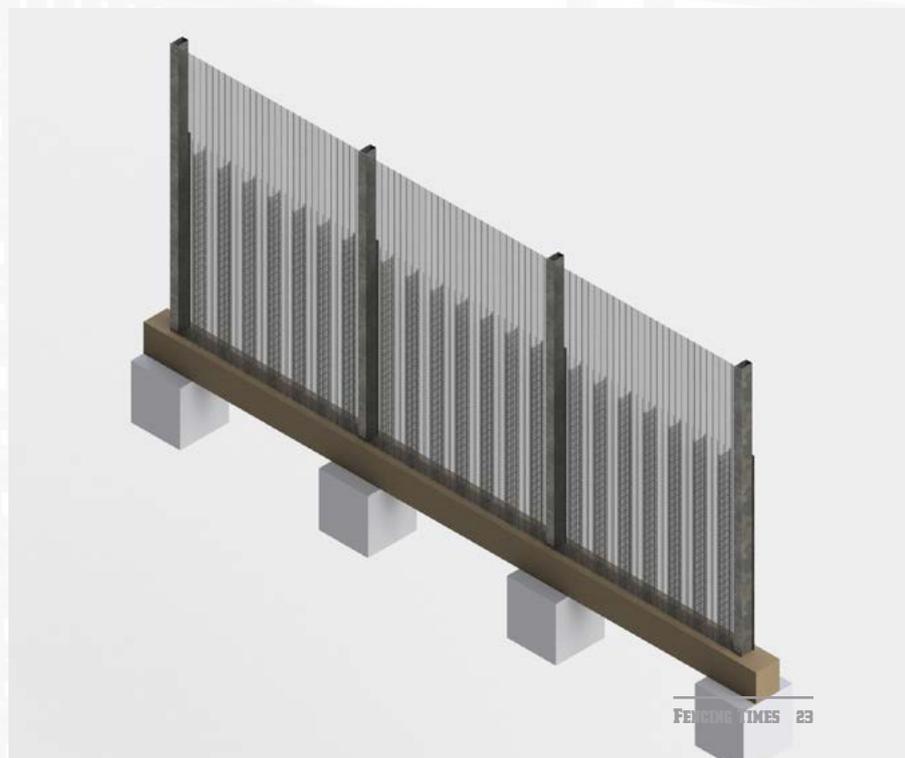
Threat	Tool	Delay in minutes to meet standard	Delay in minutes during test by certification body
Low	Hammer/saw/crowbar		16,7
Medium	Concrete shears/electric grinder	10	13
Agressive	Petrol grinder	5	6,8

### FEATURES

The posts of the new Securifor Defender are made of 120-by-80-millimetre box sections. The prison mesh panels are clamped against them on two sides with cover strips, which are secured with bolts in rivet nuts. The intermediate panels are fixed with wire spirals. *“The technology with those wire coils comes from Hesco, a defensive barrier producer and an affiliate company in the Praesidiad group,”* says Van Waes. *“Hesco builds large gabion baskets lined with geotextile, or which fit large bags that can be filled with sand and earth. Hesco baskets are usually sold for military applications, soldiers can use them to quickly build a defensive wall. Because the intermediate panels are less than 40 centimetres apart, there is always a panel in the way for the grinder.”* Standard prison mesh panels are used for the intermediate panels and on the inside. *“The panel on the outside we weld from Zincalu wire, because it will be buried.”*

### OPTIONS

The height of 3 metres is the minimum height of the new Securifor Defender. *“Higher is of course also possible, if the situation calls for it,”* says Van Waes. *“And in theory, you could make the fence even stronger by replacing the standard prison mesh with Securifor 2D or 4D panels.”* With 4D, the horizontal wires alternate, while with 2D part of the horizontal wires are doubled. Further options include base plates for the posts and crank extensions for rolls of razor wire. The new fence type is also suitable for Betafence's Smart Fence, a system where detection wires are clicked to the fence in a special cable duct. *“All in all, we are making a big step forward with Securifor Defender. Customers can now offer greater delay and visibility for about the same price.”* ■



# Frog-X: the new underground drive from Came

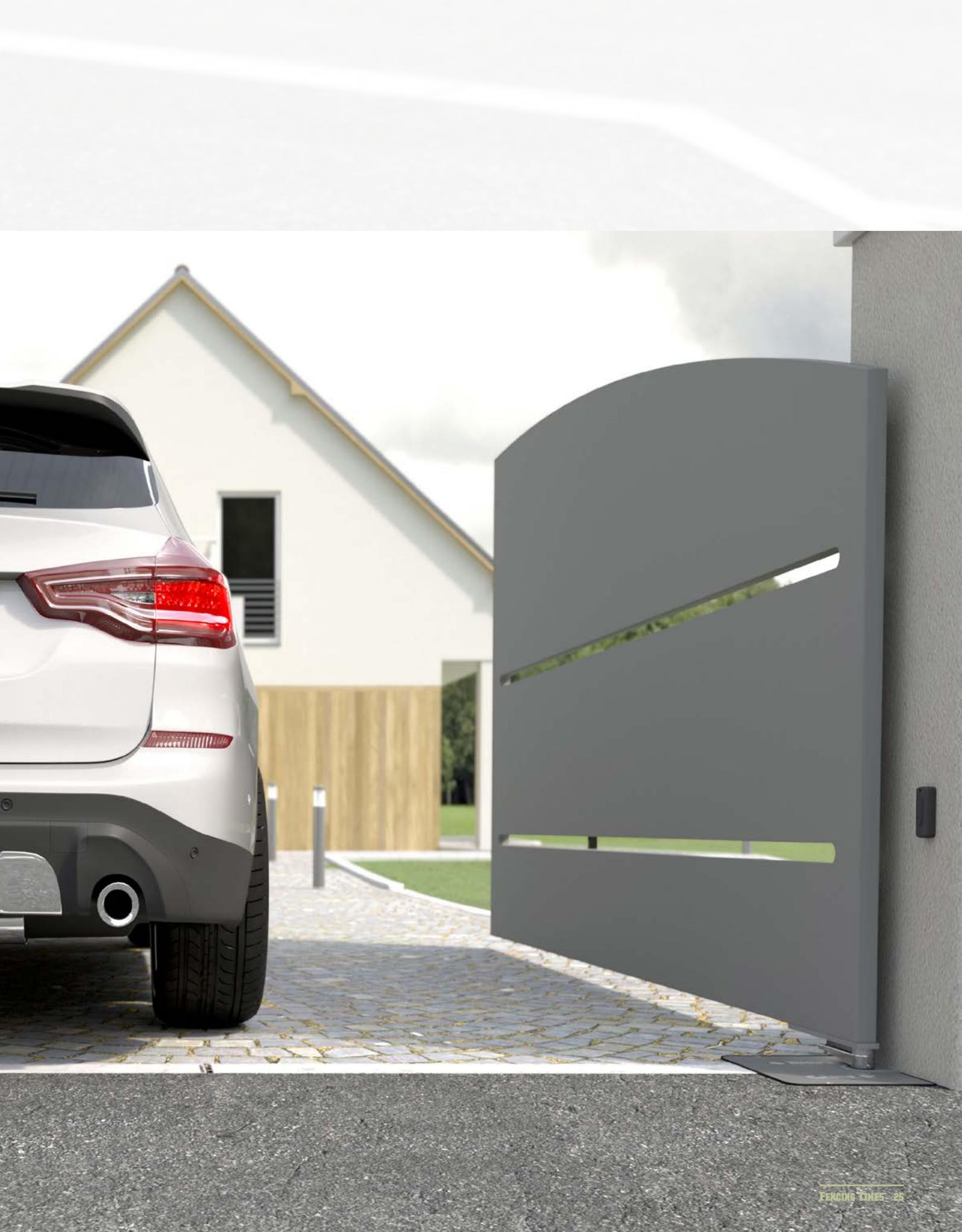
This winter, Italian drive manufacturer Came added a new version of its underground swing gate drives to its range. The Frog-X features a brushless motor and hardened steel transmission, and fits into the existing Frog casing.

“**T**o stand still today is to go backwards,” says Kieran Harrod, marketing manager of the UK Came branch in Castle Donington, just outside Nottingham. “Our existing line of Frog motors is leading the underground drive market, but naturally we want to keep on innovating and ensure that we continue to supply products that are going to stand the test of time for the next generation of installers. This mindset has produced the Frog-X: the most advanced drive we’ve ever made.”

## BRUSHLESS

The new Frog-X features a brushless motor. “Not only does that reduce wear and tear,” Harrod says, “but it also allows you to determine the gate leaf’s opening and closing positions even more precisely. On top of that, the obstacle detection is even more reliable and therefore safer, because the motor’s speed and torque can both be adjusted electronically while it’s moving. We call it ‘Adaptive Speed and Torque’. Then also the brushless motor makes the drive quieter and, above all, faster: a gate leaf now opens 90 degrees in just 10 seconds.” In addition to the brushless motor, the new Frog features a new transmission with gears made from extra-hardened steel. “Connecting it has been made easier too, as there’s no longer a need for an external encoder.”





## CAME CONNECT

Like all new Came drives, the Frog-X is compatible with Came Connect. "Connecting a Came Connect Gateway to the Frog-X automatically connects the gateway to the Ethernet via Wi-Fi, 4G or LAN, and you can manage and configure the control system remotely," Harrod says. "When it's time for maintenance or if the gate malfunctions, installers are sent a notification via the system's SetUp App. They are able to view the status of photocells and contact strips, and can easily add handheld transmitters. Via the Automation App, the customer can see whether the gate is open or closed, operate it from anywhere in the world, set timers, send the installer a request for assistance, and lots more."

## DEVELOPMENT

"Technological advances and product reliability are two of the foundations of our business," Harrod says. "They give us the edge on the competition. That's why we invest massively in R&D – at our headquarters in Dosson di Casier, just outside Venice, we have a development team of 120." There were also a number of installers actively involved in developing the Frog-X. "The lead engineers had a lot of contact with our network of installers. They invited some of them to travel to Italy so they could get together in person to discuss the functions and features the new Frog should have. The installers also gave feedback on which of the potential improvements would be valuable to the largest number of customers. The new Frog-X is completely tailored to the needs and requirements of the market."



## RANGE

The Frog-X will join the existing Frog drives on the market. *"The Frog AE, which we offer in both a 230-volt and a 24-volt version, will stay in the range for use by installers who are familiar with the existing technology,"* Harrod says. The new Frog-X runs on 24 volts and is suitable for gate leaves of up to 4 metres wide and weighing up to 400 kilos, or with a maximum leaf weight of 800 kilos and up to 2 metres in width. It is supplied in a new casing that features reinforced welded joints and a mounting pin of high-grade steel. *"The new box is waterproof in line with IP67 – it can be fully submerged – but it also fits into the old casing, so you can retrofit it. It really is the best swing gate drive we've ever produced."* ■





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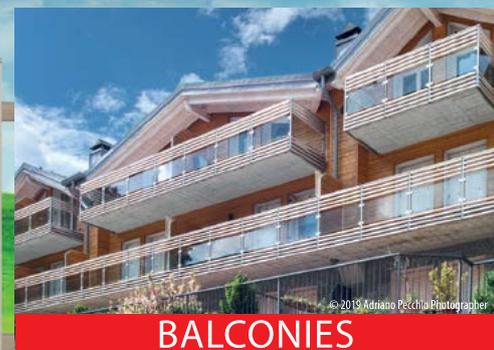
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# AFI calls for entries for Fencing Awards 2024

The Association for Fencing Industries (AFI) has announced a new edition of the UK Fencing Industry Awards for this year, with a presentation ceremony in October at Newcastle's St James' Park football stadium.

All winners



“**T**he Awards are a big success,” AFI director Pete Clark says. “Since the first time we held them in 2022, the industry has gained more recognition and there’s more awareness of the value of a good fence. And many of the finalists and winners of previous editions really have been able to score more orders, because they’ve been able to profile themselves as professionals. That’s why we’re going to keep holding the Fencing Awards every year going forward.”

## FENCING AWARDS

Fencing installers who want to take part can submit projects for the awards until the end of spring. “We need a brief description that explains why the project was special,” Clark says. “What were the challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them? And obviously we also need photos of the end result. A jury will evaluate all entries this summer and select the winners, which we’ll announce at the ceremony in October.”

Tomley Projects won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Echo category (for an installer with a turnover of up to 1.5 million pounds sterling). “This was a very exciting project,” owner Tom Bowlby says. “We did all the groundwork, construction and fencing for this equestrian build. There’s privacy fencing made of creosoted timber for a separate quarantine carrel, with Duralock fencing made of PVC and post and rail for the tracks to the arena and the paddocks. We also made another retaining wall and clad it with wood. While this may sound like a lot of variations in fencing, each served a purpose and we managed to blend the different types, creating a flow in the fence lines.”



## CATEGORIES

Participants can submit entries in the categories of Agriculture and Equine, Domestic, Gates and Barriers, Highways and Railways, Industrial, Security, Sports and Education, Temporary and Hoarding, Project of the Year and, starting this year, the new category Apprentice of the Year. "We, as AFI, work to coach and train new installers as much as we can," Clark says. "This year, to show the next generation of fencers that their efforts are valued, they'll be given their own category. It's also a way to generate interest in the industry amongst future fencing installers."

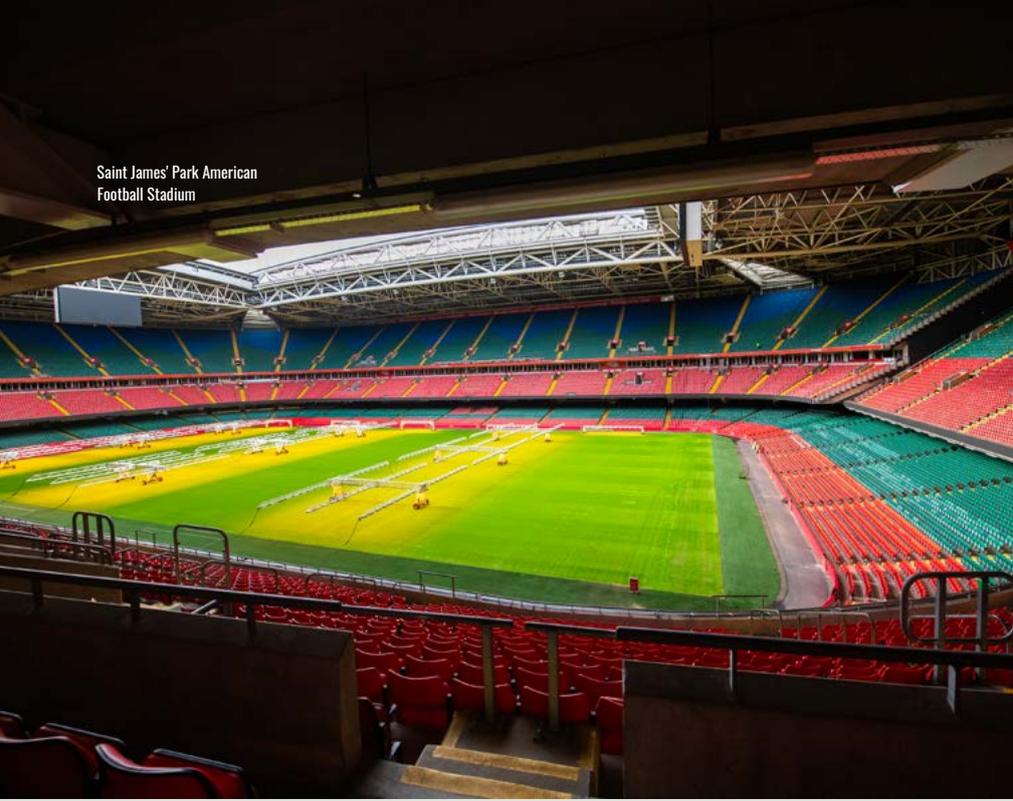
Adam O'Reilly  
of Harper  
Chalice, with  
Alistair Henman  
from sponsor  
Zaun Limited  
on the right



Topan Fencing won the Award for Project of the Year, with a project of 300,000 pounds sterling for a large school for children of all ages in need of special education, and for children with disabilities. It ranged from park fencing through football cages to highway noise barrier fencing and anti-ram fencing that keeps vehicles out.



Saint James' Park American Football Stadium



## NEWCASTLE

After London and Cardiff, this year it's Newcastle's turn. The 2024 awards ceremony will be held at St James' Park football stadium. "Our members come from across the UK," Clark says. "We want the awards to be accessible to everyone, not for installers from the North to have to travel the whole way to the South every year, so this year we're doing it the other way around." As with previous editions, the organisers looked for a stadium for the ceremony. "Stadiums are ideal for us: the atmosphere is good, there's something to see, there's good catering, and the costs aren't too high. But obviously it doesn't always have to be a rugby stadium; we've chosen a football stadium this time."



Louise and Charlie Wright of Front Row Fencing, with Chris Hambridge of sponsor McVeigh Parker behind them to the right. Front Row Fencing won the Award for Contractor of the Year in the Bravo category (for installers with a turnover of up to 750,000 pounds sterling) with this project, for which livestock fencing or agricultural mesh needed to be installed in artificial dunes.

## TAKE PART

The UK Fencing Awards are open to all fencing companies; you don't need to be an AFI member to take part. "If you think you meet the standard that the market expects, then you're very welcome," Clark says. "It's a fantastic opportunity to give exceptional projects, exceptional installation skills and exceptional apprentices the attention they deserve – and to be appreciated as one of the better fencing companies in the industry. On top of that, you can get lots of new inspiration and make new contacts at the ceremony. Let's raise the bar and celebrate the successes!" Entry is now open. Entries can be submitted via the AFI website. ■

Jon Hobden of Littlewood Fencing receives the Contractor of the Year Award in the Tango category, for fencers with a turnover of more than 3 million pounds sterling. Also pictured: Russell Wells of sponsor CLD Fencing Systems.



# Plast-Met adds to range

Polish fencing manufacturer Plast-Met, from Trzebnica near Wroclaw, is expanding its range. In addition to steel fencing, the company's portfolio now includes aluminium fencing styles, standardised design elements, and tailor-made design.

**“O**ur development team never stops,” export manager Maciej Radota says. “We have a separate design department that keeps on top of the latest trends, then works with the technicians to develop the models for each new season. This year's focus is on aluminium.”

## SODALIT

The first new model in the range is called Sodalit. “It's a palisade fence,” Radota says. “What you see is not posts and sections, but a continuous fence made of identical hollow sections.” Sodalit is available in two versions, known simply as Sodalit 1 and Sodalit 2. Each consists of square sections measuring 60 by 40 or 80 by 40 millimetres, welded to an underground base frame. The welding can be done at various intervals and with either the narrow or the wide side facing forward, to create different effects. Sodalit 1 is available in fencing heights of up to 1500 millimetres, while Sodalit 2 starts at 1500 millimetres in height and has a cross-profile halfway up to keep the upright profiles stable. This horizontal profile is also used in the matching Sodalit swing and sliding gate leaves.





101



## Sublimation

In chemistry, sublimation is the process of converting a solid material directly into a gas, without liquefying it first. For example when ice suddenly turns into water vapour without first becoming water, this is known as sublimation. In the world of powder coating, the term is used for a technique in which a powder-coated aluminium or steel product can look like it's actually made of wood or marble. As the first step of the process, the product is given an ordinary coating. After that a film, which has had images printed on it with special ink, is applied to the coating. This film is vacuum-sealed to the coating to ensure that it's firmly attached. The film is then heated in a special oven, so rapidly that the dry ink suddenly becomes a gas and penetrates deep into the polyester coating. Coatings on which this technique is used are also known as Decoral coatings, after the Italian powder-coating company that first applied it on an industrial scale: Viv Decoral, from Arcole near Verona.



## HORIZONTAL

In contrast, two other new models consist solely of horizontal profiles. They are Malachit AL and Travertyn AL; Plast-Met already has steel versions of these in its range. For Malachit the infill consists of horizontal profiles measuring 100 by 20 millimetres, while for Travertyn the profiles are 200 by 20 millimetres. Both of these are welded between two vertical profiles, with a small gap, creating a fencing element that can be installed between two posts. Just as with Sodalit, swing and sliding gates with Malachit AL and Travertyn AL infill are available in addition to the fencing.

## PORTALUX

The new models are not only available as fences and gates: there's also an entrance portal, called Portalux, available for all three types of fencing. *"There are always customers seeking additional allure or prestige,"* Radota says. *"These customers can combine the new Portalux portal with the pedestrian gate next to the driveway."* The portal has space for lighting, a house number, a letterbox, a parcel box, an intercom, and a full range of access control components. *"The portal is designed in such a way that no additional knowledge or tools are required for assembly. It's something that every fencing installer can do."*

## SUBLIMATION

Another new addition to the range: sublimation coatings<sup>1</sup> with wood effect. *"Wood is really popular at the moment,"* Radota says. *"With this process, it's impossible to tell the difference between the aluminium profiles and the wooden boards in the fence. You need to take a very close and careful look to see that it's not real wood."* Plast-Met supplies the special coating in four different patterns: pine, golden oak, silver oak, and black cherry. They can be ordered for the Travertyn AL and Malachite AL models, as well as for some of the steel models in the range. *"Sublimation with wood effect goes with any fence, and it lightens the entire structure."*

<sup>1</sup>) See box

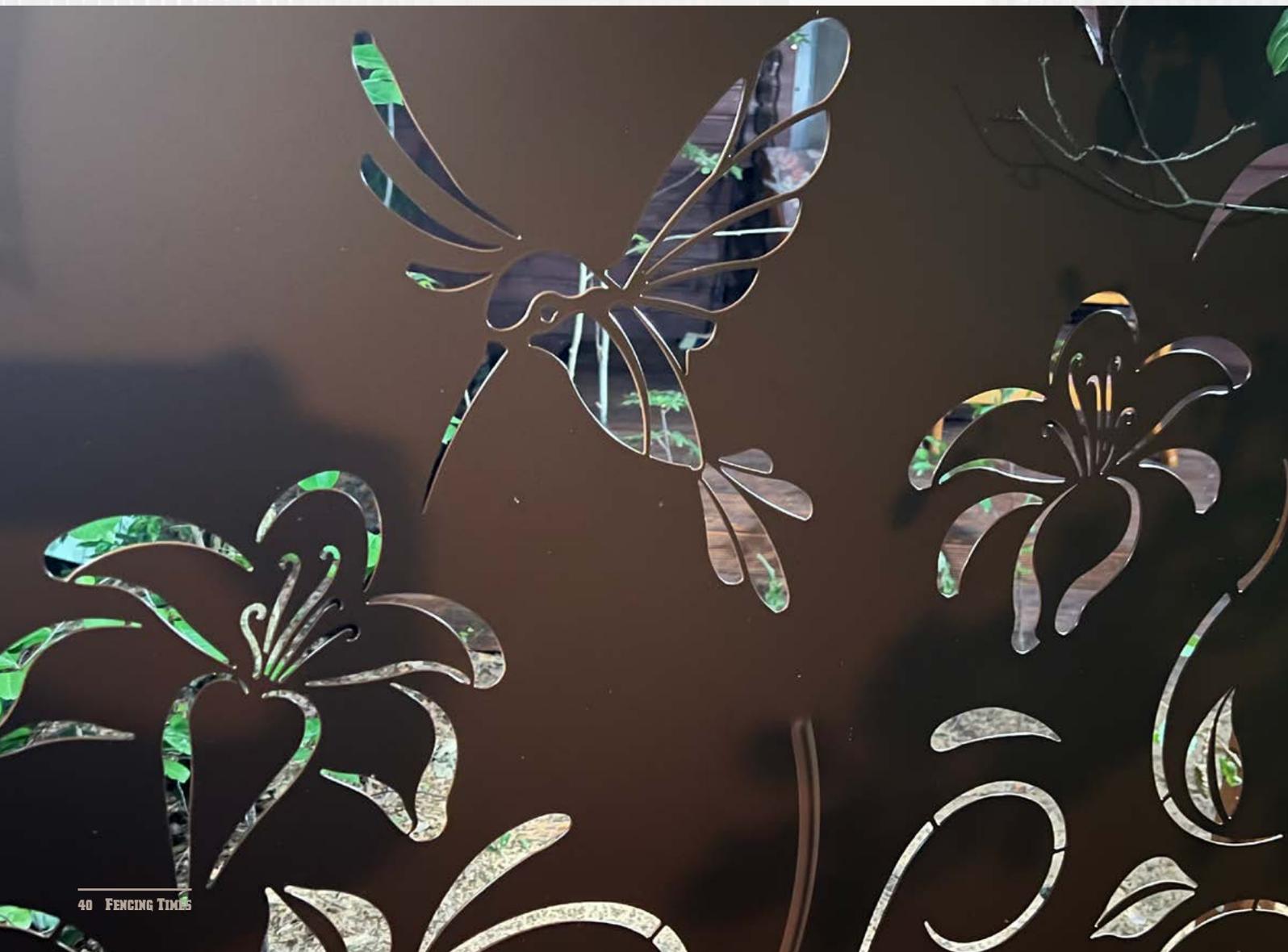


## OSKOMA

Oskoma is the name for the process by which the fence for a project is designed and manufactured in a new, standardised way. Radoka explains the new approach: "For Oskoma projects, we ensure that the customer works with a designer. We have our own in-house designers for this, but can also use industrial designers in the area of the project. The important thing is that the designer can take the customer's wishes into account right from the start, designing the fence to match the style of the building or the surroundings. Customised projects don't get more tailor-made than this. The patterns on the fencing panels around a property can be customised to reflect the homeowner's passions or hobbies, or the company's business activities. It creates unique and eye-catching entrances."

## Brites

The final addition is the Brites privacy elements. "Brites are elements made of steel plate, from which we've laser-cut designs," Radoka says. "Customers can choose to have us laser-cut their own designs, for an additional cost, but we also have a selection of standard designs. You can use them to build an entire fence, or alternate them with the Travertyn or Malachit models or the Kwarc model from the steel range. They also work well between fences made of natural stone or wood." Both vertical and horizontal Brites are available. "With all these new features, our clients can continue to stand out from the competition in the 2024 season – and meet their own customers' needs," says founder and owner Marian Przybylski. "This has always been what we stand for, ever since we started back in 1988. All the fences and gates in our catalogue have been designed in consultation with our customers or according to their wishes. Anyone who wants to come to Trzebnica to discuss the future and the development of the fencing market is always very welcome." ■





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# European Standards texts soon available for free

**G**ood news for everyone who likes to keep abreast of all laws and regulations: if things go well, the texts of the European Standards will soon be available for free to all EU citizens. That is, the harmonised technical standards. This, according to a ruling by the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg in early March this year, which we were alerted to thanks to a press release from a German industry association for locks and door hardware.

The ruling follows a long-running dispute: In 2018, the European Commission rejected the application of two non-profit organisations, Public Resource.Org and Right to Know, to grant them access to harmonised technical standards concerning toy safety. The organisations demanded this access citing a different Court ruling which casually mentioned that harmonised European standards 'form part of European Union law'. The organisations therefore challenged the EU Commission before the General Court of the European Union. In 2021, this Court declared this rejection lawful, whereupon the two organisations appealed to the European Court of Justice. The Court of Justice has now overturned the General Court's ruling, confirming its own previous ruling. The reason given by the Court for this ruling was that there is an overriding public interest in the distribution of harmonised toy safety standards.

The ruling does not (yet) affect all non-harmonised standards and testing procedures. For now, the literal ruling only applies to the harmonised (toy) standards brought forth in the lawsuit. However, the industry association – and we along with them – expect a large number of interpretations of the ruling in the near future, such as, for example, in the case of references to standards of any nature in national (construction) law.

If it turns out that this ruling should actually be applied to all harmonised standards, it will likely have major consequences for the standardisation organisations such as the DIN, NEN, AFNOR and CEN, which are now financed by the sale of standards, among other things, and will then therefore have to look for new sources of income.

The complete text of the Court's ruling can be found by googling case number C-588/21 P. ■





# According to a survey of 100 installers:

**84%** reported unsafe design to be the most common cause for automated gate accidents in the last 10 years

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# How to prevent cable theft at solar farms?

**E**ver since they appeared on the scene, solar farms have been popular with thieves. More recently though, their attention has switched from the solar panels themselves to the cables behind and underneath them. These have been stolen in large numbers from the farms because the high price of copper<sup>1</sup> in recent years makes the cables extremely tempting.

1) A kilo of copper now fetches more than 6 euros per kilo at the scrap metal dealer. That is three times more than 10 years ago.



*Raijmond Rondeel*

Raijmond Rondeel has worked in perimeter security for many years. For Fencing Times, he writes about securing outdoor areas with detection systems. Do you have questions? Or a practical example - and are curious what Raijmond would have offered here? Send him an email at [raijmond@fencingtimes.com](mailto:raijmond@fencingtimes.com)

What also helps is that the cables at a solar farm are usually conveniently structured and tie-wrapped together. It's a simple matter for thieves to cut off these complete cable harnesses from underneath the panels. Entire gangs have since made this their speciality and they can strip a whole farm bare in no time. A reasonably sized farm can provide around a 100 kilometres of cable. The modules are left neatly in position. According to insurers, not a week passes without cable theft being reported at a solar farm somewhere.

It goes without saying that the damage is immense. New cables have to be purchased and installed, but the consequential damage is worse still by far because the farm may be off-stream for weeks or months.

This is becoming a huge issue for the solar farm sector. Investors are very concerned about it and are postponing new plans. Banks see it as high risk and impose more stringent loan requirements on investors. Insurers too, who don't enjoy paying out, are already setting more stringent requirements. More stringent requirements for the fence around the farms, for detection, for camera surveillance, for control rooms and alarm follow-up. If these requirements are not fulfilled, they refuse to insure the farm, or they pay out less in the event of theft<sup>2)</sup>.

2) I know that in the Netherlands the Insurers' Association is considering including solar farms in the VRRKI (Enhanced Risk Class Classification). This means that all insurers will adopt the same, established standards and requirements before insuring a farm. So no exceptions any more, everyone must comply with the same requirements no matter which insurer they choose. Insurers also use the VKRI for insuring banks, jewellers, museums and other high-risk groups. Similar discussions are likely to be under consideration in other countries.





So, is it impossible to make solar farms theft-proof? No, it can be done. Over the past two years, I've written about several detection methods, all of which can be put to good use in solar farms. From fence detection and camera surveillance to radars and ground detection. Good security starts with a good physical defence of the farm – in other words, a sturdy fence and a good gate. Then comes reliable detection. This detection needs to be fast, or better expressed: early. At an early stage, on or at the perimeter. In other words, detection at or on the fence and the gate, or preferably even before them. This then gives you the longest response time for reacting to the alarm and therefore the least chance of loss. Then, of course, you need adequate alarm follow-up, which ensures that security guards or police can be on site within 10 or 15 minutes. If you then also make sure that the intruders cannot do too much damage in those 15 minutes, for example by using special fixings to prevent the equipment from being easily removed, or by deploying obstacles to prevent lorries or even large vans from entering the site, then you're in a good position and have actually fulfilled all the requirements for good security.



So why do things still often go wrong? The answer is simple: Most solar farm investors refuse to spend money on security. In the future, they are going to be forced to by insurers (which would be excellent news for our industry and provide great opportunities for fencing installers), but so far this has certainly not been the case. There have been no fixed requirements, and as a result considerable cutbacks have been made on things like a sturdy fence armed with proper detection. Let's put it politely: you can always find an installer who claims that one or two cameras are enough, rather than a camera every 35 metres along the perimeter. Or that a single detection cable halfway along the fence is enough, instead of every 90 centimetres – as per the manufacturer's advice. Not to mention fence maintenance. That is a subject in its own right on which I've previously written an entire column. Inadequate detection ensures that intruders go undetected. Insufficient maintenance (weeds, sagging netting) produces an overload of false alarms, resulting in a failure to respond to the one alarm that proves to be genuine. Ground detection, with hardly any false alarms and very early detection – already from outside the fence, it doesn't get any faster – is the best solution, but investors are not willing to pay for that at all, in my own experience.

However, when it comes to protecting just the copper cables, a different solution is actually available. And it's simple, reliable and cheap. It consists of a simple fibre-optic cable that you lay yourself – or get someone else to do it – in the cable harnesses at the farm. This fibre-optic cable is not a detection cable. It is merely a cable that simply accompanies the cable bundles. The cable is connected at one end to a light and at the other to a box – the controller or module, or however it's named. That box forms the detector: as soon as it stops receiving light, the fibre-optic cable must have been cut. It means there will be an immediate alarm as soon as copper thieves make their first cut. Because thieves cut the cables away in whole bundles at a time. They are not going to check first which cables are copper and then cut them one by one. They don't have time for that.

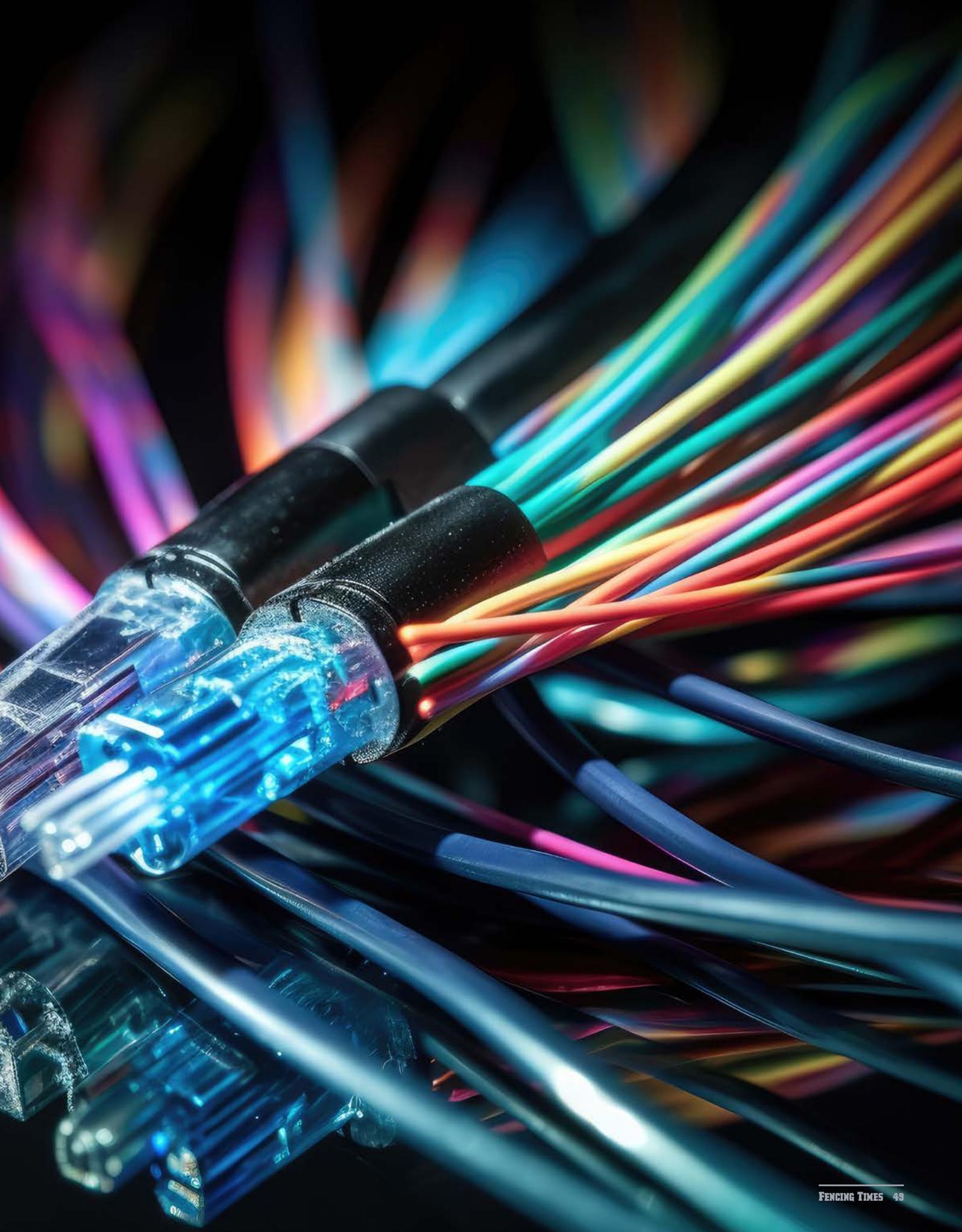
Why a fibre-optic cable? A fibre-optic cable has several advantages over a copper cable. The first advantage is that it's not easy to bridge, or to connect to. In the case of an ordinary copper cable, I could already sabotage the whole thing with a simple connector. Assuming I knew which cable was the alarm wire. Furthermore, fibre-optic cable can span long distances with no signal loss, or the need for additional power supplies or something similar. I'm aware of a system that has 1200 metres of fibre-optic cable connected with no problem. Using this method, you can protect quite a few wiring harnesses under modules with just a single box and one long loop. If you're called in on time and can run the cable through the mounting eyelets of the solar panels, it will provide immediate protection. Then, if you're unlucky enough to have a thief turn up and target not the cables but the modules, you detect him with this too. Furthermore, fibre-optic cable is impervious to corrosion, thunderstorms or other atmospheric interference. And it doesn't work via an antenna that can be affected by all sorts of interference.

The central module or controller, the actual detector, is of course placed in a field cabinet or building. If an alarm is triggered, a relay is switched and this transmits the report to the alarm system, which in turn informs the monitoring company's control room via the internet (nowadays usually a 4G module). And they can then immediately despatch security guards or police because this technology doesn't generate unnecessary alarms. An alarm is only generated if the cable is cut, so there is 100 per cent certainty that cable thieves are at work.

The system is also always on. There is no messing around switching on and off when the maintenance team comes to cut the grass or when the electrician needs to do something with the inverters. The system is always passively there in the background. And it's cheap to install, you just have the cable laid along with the other cables.

Operational costs are also low. The system doesn't need any maintenance. What is there to maintain for a fibre-optic cable that is not a detection cable? All you need to do is test it once or twice a year to make sure the module is still working and that the alarm still reaches the control room. Bish, bash, invoice. ■







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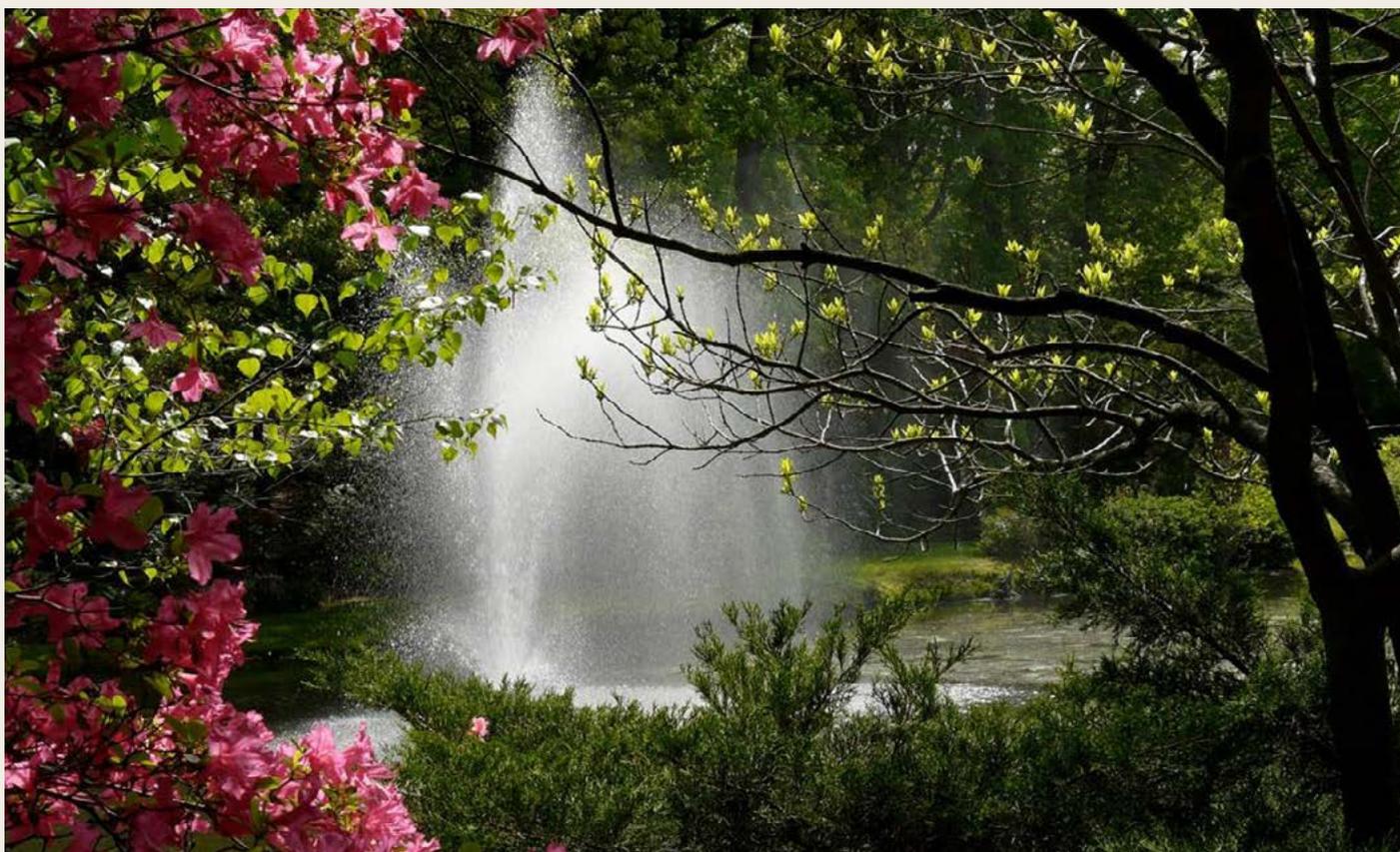
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# FENCES IN THE NEWS



24 APRIL 2024

## Fence beats playground



**I**n the New Jersey town of Wayne, 30 kilometres from New York City, a botanical garden will finally be surrounded by a wildlife fence after two years of wrangling – to the enormous satisfaction of the Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum (FOLA). The group had stood by for years with great

distress as wild deer snacked on the botanical garden's rare plants. However, the decision has made residents of the Pines Lake neighbourhood very unhappy as they fear that wildlife will now be forced out into the narrow streets of the neighbouring district, where they will eat the plants in

residents' gardens. Additionally, they would have preferred that the 200,000 dollars to be spent on the fence had been put towards a new playground for the neighbourhood's children. Well, while we don't have anything against children's playgrounds, if they come at the cost of a fence then obviously

we're biased and are happy that the Friends of the Arboretum won the battle for the council's money. With a bit of luck the local residents will all order fences to keep the deer out of their own gardens too, which would mean more than enough orders for New Jersey's fencing installers for the time being. ■

# Broken fence threatens to keep village residents awake again



**I**n Houston, a village in north-western Canada, just about all the 1000 residents were being driven crazy by the whistling of goods trains, which run straight through the village day and night. The only level crossing in the village had no security, so train drivers whistled and tooted in Houston to warn that they were coming through. And so, back in 2020, a full-blown Train Whistle Stop Plan was created. The various aspects of the plan were as follows:

⇒ Step 1: apply for a federal government grant to install security at the level crossing;

⇒ Step 2: install barriers, flashing lights, and 400 metres of fencing to each side of the level crossing;  
 ⇒ Step 3: make a formal request to the Canadian National railway company that the drivers stop sounding their whistles.

The wheels of bureaucracy turn as slowly in Canada as they do everywhere else, but by the end of 2023 the town had received 400,000 Canadian dollars in grant funding, an additional 120,000 dollars had been set aside in the municipal budget, the barriers, flashing lights and fence had been installed, the request had been sent to Canadian National, and it looked like the train whistles

had finally stopped for good... if not for the fact that by now, villagers who were too lazy to go just a little out of their way had repeatedly cut holes in the new fence. Whether these were the same residents driven crazy by the whistling or other residents who weren't so easily bothered, the press release doesn't say. In any case: Canadian National has warned that if the vandalism doesn't end soon, another official whistle-blowing order will be issued. As a result, the municipality has put a special team on standby to repair any holes in the fence as soon as they are discovered, and has threatened substantial fines for anyone caught cutting a hole in the fence. ■

# TV crew solves fencing dispute

**I**n Toledo, Ohio, the owner of a vacant block of land had it cleared of all weeds and other vegetation. The team that came to do that job managed to damage the neighbour's fence in the process. The landowner claimed that the fence had already been in poor condition and was 'leaning' on the vegetation on his land, thus falling over when the vegetation was cleared. "We made

*sure to inform the neighbour,"* he said. The neighbour, however, felt that the gap in his old fence was completely the landowner's fault and asked him to install a whole new fence. The landowner rejected this demand, whereupon the neighbour called in a reporter from the local television station, who presented a tear-jerking story on how one of the neighbour's Rottweiler puppies had almost

been run over after escaping through the hole in the fence – and that the neighbour had now had to get rid of his two puppies, because he was unable to afford to pay for a new fence himself. The landowner runs several Toledo restaurants and has a public reputation to maintain, so was left with no choice but to immediately phone a local fencing installer to get the fence fixed asap. Following which,

the neighbour claimed on camera – with a straight face – that he was happy that he could now get new puppies. We haven't looked into what a Rottweiler puppy costs on the Ohio dog market, but here in Europe prices range from 1500 to 2000 euros. We think that the neighbour could have nailed quite a few planks to his broken fence for that amount, but what would we know? ■



**BENNETT ENTERPRISES BREAKS MAN'S FENCE**

# India to build border fence

**T**he India Government is planning to build a fence along its lengthy border with Myanmar, the country's Home Minister Amit Shah announced, after hundreds of Myanmar soldiers fleeing insurgent attacks crossed the border into India.

Shah, who gave no details on how the fence would be built or in what timeframe, said that India also wants to end its free movement agreement with Myanmar, which allows those living in border regions to enter each other's countries without visas

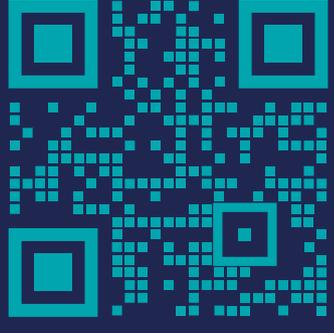
when travelling short distances.

We have no knowledge of India-Myanmar relations and thus no idea whether installing a fence will be a good thing for the people of these countries. It's good news for the local fencing installers though: the border between

India and Myanmar is more than 1200 kilometres long, so that will keep them busy for a bit. ■



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